

Congress of the United States  
Washington, DC 20515

December 10, 2018

The Honorable Kirstjen M. Nielsen  
Secretary of Homeland Security  
Washington, D.C. 20528

**RE: Inadmissibility on Public Charge Grounds (DHS Docket No. USCIS-2010-0012)**

Dear Secretary Nielsen:

We write to express our opposition to the Department of Homeland Security's proposed "Inadmissibility on Public Charge Grounds" rule (DHS Docket No. USCIS-2010-0012). We are concerned that this proposal will have serious consequences for families who are applying to programs that support their basic needs in Oregon and across the United States. We demand that you rescind this proposal.

By expanding the list of publicly-funded programs considered a "public charge," the proposed rule would penalize immigrant families for seeking benefits under Medicaid, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, housing assistance programs, and the Low-Income Subsidy for Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage, among others. This stands in direct contrast to longstanding guidance describing the benefits subject to public charge consideration.<sup>1</sup> The proposed rule also upends more than a century's interpretation of "public charge" to apply only to those applicants who would become "primarily dependent" on the government for their care. If implemented, this would cause significant harm to immigrants, their families, and the communities they live in across Oregon.

Nationwide, approximately 26 million people and 9.2 million children will be impacted by these proposed changes. In Oregon, approximately 291,000 people and 113,000 children would be impacted. This scrutiny would intimidate many Oregonians and residents of the United States from using programs that are essential for their livelihood. Decreased participation will result in worse health outcomes, malnutrition and higher levels of food instability, increased use of emergency rooms, increased prevalence of communicable diseases, increased rates of poverty and housing instability, and reduced productivity—all consequences that you highlighted in the proposed rule.

The proposed rule is a transparent attempt to reduce legal immigration by complicating the process for those who decide to immigrate legally to the United States. These increased burdens would jeopardize the opportunity for U.S. citizens to reunite with their families who

<sup>1</sup> Field Guidance on the Deportability and Inadmissibility on Public Charge Grounds," 64 FR 28689, May 26, 1999

apply for green cards, visas, and adjustment. Given its significant negative impacts on the lives of Oregonians and communities around the country, we urge you to immediately withdraw the proposed rule.

Sincerely,



Earl Blumenauer  
Member of Congress



Ron Wyden  
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator



Peter A. DeFazio  
Member of Congress



Suzanne Bonamici  
Member of Congress



Kurt Schrader  
Member of Congress